
Transportation Committee

ESB 5110

Brief Description: Including four public port districts on the executive board of regional transportation planning organizations and lowering the population threshold.

Sponsors: Senators Rockefeller and Oke.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- A Regional Transportation Planning Organization containing a county with a population greater than three hundred thousand must provide voting membership on its executive board to the state Transportation Commission, the state Department of Transportation, and the four largest port districts within the region.

Hearing Date: 3/21/05

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7347).

Background:

Federal law requires that metropolitan areas with a population greater than 50,000 have a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in order to receive federal highway and transit funds. This designation is made by the Governor and must have the concurrence of local government officials.

Federal law requires MPOs to develop a 20-year metropolitan transportation plan and a three-year financially constrained transportation improvement program. Projects eligible for federal funds must be included in a MPO transportation improvement program.

In order to ensure local and regional coordination, state law authorizes the voluntary association of governments for transportation planning purposes in the form of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). The federally-mandated MPOs are designated as the RTPOs under the State's 1990 Growth Management Act. State requirements for regional transportation planning largely mirror federal requirements, and also require that the transportation elements of local plans conform with the Growth Management Act and are consistent with the regional transportation plan. There are currently 15 RTPOs, which include all of the state's counties except San Juan.

In order to qualify for state planning funds, an RTPO containing a county with a population greater than one million must provide voting membership on its executive board to the state Transportation Commission, the state Department of Transportation, and the three largest port

districts within the region. Additionally, the RTPO must assure that at least 50 percent of the local elected officials serving on its executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority.

Summary of Bill:

In order to qualify for state planning funds, an RTPO containing a county with a population greater than three hundred thousand must provide voting membership on its executive board (or equivalent board) to the state Transportation Commission, the state Department of Transportation, and the four largest port districts within the region. Additionally, the RTPO must assure that at least 50 percent of the local elected officials serving on its executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.